

How to Retire

Congratulations! You have made the decision that you are ready to retire and start a new chapter of your life. The following information, along with reading MCERA's [Service Retirement Policy](#), should help clarify the steps you will need to take in order to choose the best date, complete your retirement application, and make your retirement official.

Step 1: Choose your Retirement Date

Depending on whether you are an active member, a deferred member, or a member with reciprocal service.

Active Members

If you are an active member in MCERA, the earliest date you may become retired is the first day following the last pay period in which you receive compensation from the plan sponsor for regular employment. While you may elect a later date of retirement, you should be aware of the impact this election may have upon the conversion of accrued sick leave into retirement service credit. This means that your retirement date needs to be the day after the last day of the pay period in which you are still getting paid. For example, if your last day of work is on a Tuesday, but that pay period doesn't end until the following Saturday, then your retirement date will be the day after that Saturday (on Sunday).

Deferred Members

If you are a deferred member who does not have reciprocal service, you can choose any retirement date as long as you submit your application by the application deadline.

Members with Reciprocal Service

If you are a member with reciprocal service, you must retire from all reciprocal systems on the same date. We recommend that you begin your application process earlier in the 60 day period before your retirement date so that all of the involved systems can coordinate your retirement.

Step 2: Request a Retirement Benefit Estimate

While you can create your own retirement estimates on MemberDirect as often as you like, MCERA recommends that you request a formal estimate 3-6 months before your chosen retirement date by submitting an [Estimate/Consultation Request Form](#) and meeting with a retirement specialist. This meeting will help clarify the different retirement benefit options available to you as well as answer any other questions you might have.

Step 3: Gather your Supporting Documents

There are several supporting documents that are required in addition to your retirement application including certified copies of birth certificates, certified copies of marriage certificates or registered domestic partnerships, and dissolution of marriage documents. The first page of MCERA's [Service Retirement Packet](#) is a Retirement Application Checklist that lists which documents will be required for you to supply. It is a good idea to gather these documents well in advance of submitting your application. Keep in mind that these documents **must** be certified copies. Submitting photocopies or documents that are not certified could result in a delay of your application. If you are unsure if the documents you currently have are acceptable, you can bring them by our office during office hours and we will be happy to let you know.

Step 4: Submit Your Application for Service Retirement

You can obtain MCERA's Service Retirement Application Packet either by downloading it from [MemberDirect](#), by downloading it from the [Forms & Publications](#) section of our website, by stopping by our office, or we can mail the packet to you.

Once you have completed your retirement application, it may be submitted no earlier than 60 days prior to your retirement date and no later than the retirement date. An application submitted more than 60 days prior to the retirement date will be returned to you. Since MCERA is closed on weekends, the deadline to submit a retirement application is the Friday prior to the retirement date. Any retirement applications received after the requested retirement date will have the retirement date adjusted to the date MCERA receives the application.

Additional Things to Consider

- Notify your employer of your retirement date. Active members must separate from employment before retirement benefits can begin.
- Change your email address in MemberDirect from your work email to your personal email. That way, you can still use the password recovery feature if you forget your password.
- Price and compare medical coverage as you will no longer have employer sponsored health insurance.
- Get information on Social Security benefits, if you are eligible. You can visit [Social Security's Retirement Estimator](#) to get an estimate of your Social Security payments.
- Enroll in Medicare with benefits effective as of your retirement date if you, or your spouse, are over 65 at retirement.
- Contact your tax advisor to determine tax withholding.
- If you have an illness or injury that makes it impossible for you to keep working, you may be eligible for a Disability Retirement. For more information, download our [Disability Retirement Handbook](#) and contact the retirement office at (707) 463-4328.